

C H E S H U N T

# Urban District Council.



## ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR

➤ 1896. ➤

BY

WALTER F. CLARK,

D.P.H., R.C.S., R.C.P., LOND.

*M. O. H.*

CHESHUNT:

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**To the Chairman and Members**  
**OF THE**  
**URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR CHESHUNT.**



GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to lay before you my report on the Sanitary condition of your district during the year 1896.

The usual forms provided by the Local Government Board, giving tabulated information as to the incidence of different diseases and the mortality at different periods of life are appended.

Although Form B shows that a larger number of cases of the diseases specified in the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1890, has been reported, you will see from Form A that only 3 of these cases have proved fatal, and will infer that such infectious diseases have been of a milder type than usual.

In Table "C" I have given a comparison of the year's births, population and deaths, with those of the last 10 years, which will give a rough standard of the general health of your district.

**General Sanitary Condition.**

The area of your district is 8430 acres.

The population, estimated to the middle of the year, was 10,787 that is 1·28 persons to the acre, taking the district as a whole. You will remember, however, that the bulk of the population is concentrated on the lower part of the district.

The number of births registered was 318—185 Males, 133 Females.—The birth-rate was 29·48.

The number of deaths was 150. The usual corrections having been made, the number 151 is found, from which to calculate the death-rate for the year, which is 14 (13'99).

The number of deaths from the seven principal zymotic diseases was 21—10 of which were attributed to measles, 9 to diarrhoea, and 2 to diphtheria. The zymotic death-rate was 1'9 per 1000.

The Infant Mortality, that is the number of deaths under one year of age, was 41, giving an Infant Mortality Rate of 128'9 per 1000 births.

This is generally considered useful as an index to the general healthiness of a district, and compares favourably with the mean annual death-rate for England and Wales, which for the decade 1871-80 was 177.

Thinking that the various localities of your district, differing as they do in density of population and in elevation above ordnance datum might have some influence in determining the incidence of Infantile diseases, I have compared the numbers of deaths in the lower lying localities with those from a higher level and find them practically the same.

The deaths from phthisis were 17—at the rate of 1'57 per 1000.

### Meteorology.

The year 1896 has been chiefly remarkable for the small amount of rain which fell in the first six months. At the end of June less than 7 inches had been measured. Though the scarcity of water was much felt and caused some anxiety, I do not find it had any appreciable effect on the public health.

During the latter half-year sufficient rain fell to bring the Annual Rainfall almost up to the average.

Rainfall in inches for each month of the year 1896, compared with the Average for the last ten years :—

Month	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total.
1896	'54	'36	3'15	'65	'27	2'02	'70	2'83	6'13	3'33	1'25	3'25	24'48
Average	1'65	1'52	1'66	1'35	2'10	1'66	2'7	2'92	1'7	3'08	2'48	1'70	24'52

An appreciable quantity of rain—*i.e.*, '01 inch fell on 178 days during the year.

### Infectious Diseases.

The cases reported under the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act were the following :—

<i>Scarlatina.</i>	<i>Diphtheria.</i>	<i>Typhoid.</i>	<i>Erysipelas.</i>	<i>Puerperal Fever.</i>
36	16	3	21	1

SCARLET FEVER.—Though so many cases were reported, and doubtless others occurred which were not reported, or not recognised, no deaths occurred. During the first half of the year there were 7 cases in which the source of infection could not be traced. In July, the disease appeared in two houses in different parts of the district, and in September the same thing occurred. In October, a distinct outbreak occurred at Turnford. This had a distinct history in connection with Wounley School. The disease could be regularly traced from child to child till nine cases were counted in your district. The Council felt compelled to take legal proceedings in one case for exposing a child in a public place whilst suffering from the disease. The magistrates considered that the Council were right in prosecuting, and that the person had so exposed the child, but did not convict, as it was not proved that the child mixed with other children. The prosecution had fulfilled the purpose for which the Council directed it, by drawing public attention to the necessity of isolating infectious cases.

Another outbreak occurred at the same time in Turners Hill, and in November four cases occurred at Darnacle Hill. These were independent of one another, and of the Turnford outbreak.

DIPHTHERIA.—Of 16 cases reported, two ended fatally. One of these hardly belongs to the district, as the child was a visitor, who was ill immediately after his arrival. In November, several cases of a singularly mild type occurred at Waltham Cross. These were looked on only as slight cases of sore throat; though occurring simultaneously in

different houses, in no case that I heard of was more than one member of a family affected, and the only connection between them that I could trace was the school.

Four cases occurred in an isolated house at the end of November. The cess-pit had been emptied shortly before, and I am informed that it had been standing full and caused a nuisance.

Three cases of TYPHOID FEVER were reported. One of these was removed by the friends to Tottenham, and was eventually received in the Metropolitan Asylums' Board Hospital in Kingsland Road.

One case of PUERPERAL FEVER was reported in Eleanor Road.

Twenty-one cases of ERYSIPELAS were reported; one death resulting. Some of these cases appear to have been extremely slight. In three instances, when I called the following day, the patient had gone out.

MEASLES is not included amongst the infectious diseases to be notified, though this year it has caused three times as many deaths as they. Two of these deaths occurred in January, one in February, one in July, five in August, and one in November. In the earlier months of the year there were several cases, principally in Waltham Cross, and in August the more northerly parts of your district were affected.

Nine deaths, under the age of five, occurred from DIARRHŒA. There was no severe epidemic of Infantile diarrhœa, though the disease prevailed in August, principally in the Waltham Cross district.

A great number of cases of INFLUENZA occurred, but there was never an epidemic such as we have experienced in past years. The individual cases were less severe. The principal sufferers appear to have been those who had previously escaped the disease, and children.



### **Inspections.**

The whole of your district having been systematically inspected during the two previous years, more attention has been paid to those houses and districts which are known to require your attention. This attention has been given in some cases with good effect, but if I may be allowed to say so, the Council is, in my opinion, too easily satisfied with drawing the owner's attention to insanitary conditions, and receiving promises which are not always fulfilled.

### **Water Supply.**

This has been again a source of anxiety to the Council, who have devoted a great deal of attention to the subject. It appears that with the present machinery about 20 feet of water at the bottom of the well cannot be obtained, and there seems to be a doubt whether, if that could be done, there would be a sufficient supply. Though your district has been more fortunate than others, the scarcity of water has been felt, and for some months the supply has been intermittent. Although I do not find that the public health has suffered this year, this scarcity of water must be a source of anxiety to you with regard to the sanitation of your district. Your arrangements are all made with a view to a constant supply, and when that it is stopped it is really a serious matter. The knowledge that the air, drawn into the mains by water being drawn off at the lower levels, can only be obtained, theoretically, from lately used water-closets is not in itself re-assuring.

### **Drainage.**

The condition of the sewers in your district, generally, has been good with perhaps one exception. During the school holidays great complaint was made of the smell in Eleanor Road. The flushing tanks of the St. Joseph's School, at the head of that sewer, were turned off to save water, and the sewer being laid almost on a level became

a "sewer of deposit." When the water was again turned on the nuisance ceased.

In my Annual Report for 1895, I had again drawn your attention to the condition of Appleby Street and Hammond Street, and in February, I, with your surveyor, inspected that district, and reported to you. After consideration, you had plans prepared for a new sewer for Hammond Street, and a loan was proposed for its construction. Owing to the great fall there will be in this sewer, several ramps or tumbling bays were included in the sewer, to prevent the excessive rush of the sewage, and to render the sewer more easy of access for connections. This is the plan followed in the Goffs Oak sewer, and has answered very well. The two sewers are almost identical in character. If the sewer be made without ramps the fall will be very great, and I hope the Council will carefully exclude all storm water, or there will be a danger of flooding Flamstead End with sewage. I am informed that the Local Government Board has, as the result of their enquiry, objected to the ramps.

This sewer, as designed, does not affect Appleby Street. Several nuisances, caused by the want of drainage, exist there, to which your attention has frequently been drawn.

The drainage of your roads is a subject which is certainly of importance in affecting the healthiness of your district. I would ask the Council to pay attention to it. Cheshunt Street has not participated in the general improvement in this respect. The roof water from many of the houses is poured into the street, and the surface drainage from several yards runs across the path into the road, whilst the road drains seem quite unable to conduct the water away.

### **Removal of Refuse.**

This is still carried on as before, through contractors, and the work is, on the whole, pretty well done. Considering the large number of houses which have no ashpits or other receptacle for refuse, it would be decidedly better if refuse were removed more frequently than once a month.

### **Prevention of Infectious Diseases.**

Your district has again been fortunate in escaping epidemics, so the means you possess for combating such have, this year, proved sufficient.

The system of Notification of cases of Infectious disease is certainly of value as showing where and when diseases occur, but, with the exception of cases of scarlet fever, you possess no means of isolating them. Disinfection of houses, as generally carried out, is by no means perfect, and the disinfection of clothing and bedding is practically left undone. Acting on my advice, the Council did thoroughly disinfect one house in which five cases of scarlet fever had been reported, the occupants being lodged elsewhere whilst the work was being done.

### **BYE LAWS.**

Your Bye Laws are still in the same condition as they were a year ago, that is, some of them were revised but have not yet received the sanction of the Local Government Board.

An enquiry was held by an Inspector regarding the alteration of the level at which new houses might be built, but I have not yet heard the result. I regret that the Council have not formulated a Bye Law allowing iron dust-bins to be used. Some form of receptacle is certainly required: your old Bye Law insists upon one made of brick, and is never enforced. Ashes and refuse are thrown on the ground, frequently against the wall of the house, and left there exposed to the rain till the monthly visit of the contractor's carts, when they have to be scraped up again.

From what I have said the Council will gather the particular points to which I would direct attention in the future.

The insufficiency of the water supply is a subject the importance of which you already appreciate, and to which you are giving earnest consideration.

The drainage of Hammond Street is also under consideration, and, I hope, will be effected this year, but there is no reason why the disgraceful state of affairs in Appleby Street should continue.

The drainage of the soil under houses is never carried out, reliance being placed in a layer of concrete, which your Bye Laws require in the case of new houses. Most of the older houses have not even this, and your attention has been drawn to several cases of disease occurring, due probably to the damp soil beneath the house. This is a very important matter, and well worthy of your consideration.

For the prevention of Infectious Disease you have insufficient means at your disposal, and I would strongly advise you to make arrangements for Isolation and Disinfection. If this is left till an epidemic breaks out, the most favourable opportunity for combating the disease will infallibly be lost.

The subject of the nuisance caused by the carting of manure through the streets has been before you on one or two occasions. The Council will not wish to check one of the chief industries of their district by unnecessary restrictions upon the removal of manure through the streets, but have the power of making bye-laws regulating the removal and the hours at which it may be carried on.

Your Bye Law No. 15, prohibits the deposition of any manure, &c., on any path or roadway during its removal, but is never enforced.

The deposition of manure or filth within a certain distance of any human habitation or place of resort is dealt with in your Bye Laws (Nos. 16-20), but these are not enforced. Some of these nuisances have been abated after notices from the Council: others only when the owner wished to use the manure, and in some cases a fresh deposit of manure has been commenced.

**A.—Table of Deaths classified according to Diseases and Ages.**

<i>At all ages.</i>	<i>Under 1 year.</i>	<i>1 and under 5.</i>	<i>5 and under 15.</i>	<i>15 and under 25.</i>	<i>25 and under 65.</i>	<i>65 and upwards.</i>		<i>Diphtheria.</i>	<i>Erysipelas.</i>	<i>Measles.</i>	<i>Diarrhoea and Dysentery.</i>	<i>Rheumatic Fever.</i>	<i>Phthisis.</i>	<i>Bronchitis. Pneumonia &amp; Pleurisy.</i>	<i>Heart Disease.</i>	<i>Injuries.</i>	<i>All other Diseases.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
150	41	20	6	11	38	44	<i>Under 5.</i>	1	—	10	9	—	1	13	—	—	27	61
							<i>Over 5.</i>	1	1	—	—	1	16	9	9	4	48	89
The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.																		
*7	1	—	—	—	4	2	<i>Under 5.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
							<i>Over 5.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	3	6
†2	—	1	—	1	—	—	<i>Under 5.</i>	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
							<i>Over 5.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1

\* Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto.

† Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto.

**B.—Table of Population, Births, and New Cases of Disease known.**

<i>Population of all ages.</i>		<i>Registered Births.</i>	<i>Under 5</i>	<i>Scarlatina.</i>	<i>Diphtheria.</i>	<i>Enteric or Typhoid.</i>	<i>Puerperal.</i>	<i>Erysipelas.</i>
<i>Census 1891.</i>	<i>Estimated to middle of 1896.</i>							
9,620	10,787	318	<i>Over 5</i>	34	13	3	1	21

*Copy of forms supplied by the Local Government Board.*

**C.—Vital Statistics for the year 1896 in comparison with the average figures for the last ten years.**

	<i>Average for the last ten years.</i>				<i>1896.</i>
Population ...	...	...	...	9,272	10,787
Births ...	...	...	...	296	318
Birth-rate ...	...	...	...	31.28	29.5
Deaths ...	...	...	...	131	150
Deaths from Zymotic Disease ...	...	...	...	13	22
Death-rate per 1000 ...	...	...	...	14	14
Zymotic Death rate ...	...	...	...	1.37	2







